

## Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 AF-10 EB-11 OS-03 A-01 DRC-01

/144 W

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R 130658Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6158

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

COMIDEASTOR BAHRAIN

SECDEF WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 736

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, BA, IR, SA

SUBJECT: CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR FUTURE OF COMIDEASTFOR

REF: (A) TEHRAN 687; (B) MANAMA 54; (C) JIDDA 214

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR HAS NOT YET APPROACHED KING ON  
MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE ON BAHRAIN, BUT WILL DO SO AFTER  
OIL EMBARGO IS LIFTED. IF IT IS NECESSARY TO WITHDRAW  
FROM BAHRAIN, EMBASSY BELIEVES SAG WOULD NOT OFFER  
SAUDI PORT FACILITIES TO MIDEASTFOR, BUT WOULD NOT  
OBJECT TO HOME PORT IN KARACHI, MASSAWA, OR DIEGO  
GARCIA. SAG WOULD, HOWEVER, BE SUSPICIOUS OF USG-GOI  
MOTIVES IF IRANIAN PORT WERE TO BE UTILIZED AS MIDEASTFOR  
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HOME PORT. END SUMMARY.

1. FACED WITH INOPPORTUNE ATMOSPHERE OF OIL EMBARGO, WE HAVE NOT YET RAISED QUESTION OF COMIDEASTFOR PRESENCE ON BAHRAIN WITH KING. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, SOUNDED OUT OTHER SENIOR MEMBERS OF ROYAL FAMILY AND FIND NO OBJECTION TO COMIDEASTFOR REMAINING. ONCE OIL EMBARGO IS LIFTED, WE WILL CHECK WITH AMBASSADOR STOLTZFUS AND PROCEED TO RAISE ISSUE WITH KING, CITING FOLLOWING REASONS WHY NAVAL PRESENCE ON BAHRAIN IS ADVANTAGEOUS TO SAG:

(A) IT IS A TANGIBLE EXPRESSION OF USG INTEREST IN THE SECURITY AND STABILITY OF THE GULF.

(B) SAG NAVAL OFFICERS HAVE IN THE PAST JOINED MIDEASTFOR VESSELS FOR TRAINING CRUISES. AS SAUDI NAVAL EXPANSION PROGRAM GAINS MOMENTUM, THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN USEFUL EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGE IN JOINT EXERCISES MAY BE EVEN MORE DESIRABLE.

(C) WITHDRAWAL OF MIDEASTFOR FROM THE GULF WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY SOVIETS AND RADICAL ARABS AS ONE MORE DEFEAT FOR THE WEST, A PSYCHOLOGICAL VICTORY WHICH WOULD ONLY WORK AGAINST SAG'S LONG-RANGE INTERESTS.

(D) CONTINUATION OF THE BAHRAIN SCHOOL IS IMPORTANT SINCE WITHOUT ITS FACILITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, IT WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT TO INTEREST CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL IN SERVICE IN SAUDI ARABIA.

2. IN EVENT WITHDRAWAL FROM BAHRAIN BECOMES NECESSARY, EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON POSSIBLE ALTERNATE HOME PORTS OR AREAS:

(A) IRAN: WE BELIEVE SAG WOULD REACT NEGATIVELY TO THIS OPTION. ALREADY SUSPICIOUS OF IRAN'S BURGEONING MILITARY AND FEELING THAT USG FAVORS IRAN IN RELEASING MILITARY EQUIPMENT NOT RELEASABLE TO ARABS, SAG AND RADICAL ARABS AS WELL WOULD PROBABLY VIEW MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN IRAN AS EVIDENCE THAT USG AND IRAN WERE CONSOLIDATING THEIR LINE-UP AGAINST ARABS TO INSURE CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTROL OF GULF. BELIEVE WE SHOULD AVOID ANY OPTIONS WHICH SERVE TO INCREASE SAG SUSPICIONS OF IRAN.

(B) KARACHI: WE BELIEVE THAT PAKISTAN WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATE, FROM SAG POINT OF VIEW IF NOT FROM INDIAN OR BALUCHI VIEW. THERE IS NO SAG SUSPICION OF PAKISTANI MOTIVES.

(C) RED SEA: WITH RE-OPENED SUEZ CANAL, MEDEASTFOR PRESENCE ON RED SEA MIGHT PROVE ATTRACTIVE. ONLY POSSIBLE PORT WHICH OCCURS TO US HOWEVER IS MASSAWA. BELIEVE SAG WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THIS.

(D) DIEGO GARCIA: THIS IS SO FAR AWAY THAT SAG WILL NEVER THINK OF IT.

(E) SAUDI ARABIA: SAUDI ARABIA HAS ALWAYS BEEN SENSITIVE TO THE OPINIONS OF ITS NEIGHBORS AND WE BELIEVE THE PRESENCE OF EVEN A FRIENDLY BASE (OR ANOTHER "AUSTERE FACILITY") WOULD STIR UP EMBARRASSING CRITICISM THE SAUDIS WOULD RATHER NOT FACE. IT MAY PROVE DIFFICULT ENOUGH TO OBTAIN A POSITIVE STATEMENT OF SAG DESIRE TO HAVE MIDEASTFOR REMAIN IN BAHRAIN (AS OPPOSED TO A MERE "NO OBJECTION"); WE SEE NO INDICATION THAT THE SAG WOULD ITSELF CONSIDER TAKING MIDEASTFOR UNDER ITS WING.

3. AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT BEST OPTION IS TO GET SAG TO ASSURE SHEIKH ISA THAT IT DESIRES MIDEASTFOR REMAIN IN BAHRAIN. WILL RAISE MATTER WITH KING WHEN ATMOSPHERE IS APPROPRIATE.  
AKINS

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## Message Attributes

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